

July 31, 1970 It's a real pleasure to be with you at this 51st anniversary meeting of the New Mexico Farm Bureau. I wish to thank everyone who took part in arranging for me to have a quick glimpse at local agricultural operations.

Your cattle industry, modern stockfeeding methods, alfalfa production and the crops I saw growing are all impressive. To preserve and strengthen our agricultural capabilities is imperative, so that this Nation's increasing millions of consumers will continue to be assured adequate food at reasonable prices.

It is equally important, for the preservation of our agricultural industry, that those engaged in agriculture should be able to share in the financial returns from modern technology more nearly equitable with people in other segments of the Nation's economy.

This is the thinking that underlies current legislation before the Congress. The House Committee on Agriculture has voted out the Agricultural Act of 1970 after many months of bi-partisan effort. It goes to the floor of the House of Representatives next week with the endorsement and support of the leadership of both political parties. It has the full and enthusiastic support of the Administration.

This is a good bill, carefully designed, one of the most constructive farm measures in recent history--reflecting its painstaking, bi-partisan authorship. My hope is that the legislation will be given prompt approval by Congress and signed into law, for in my judgment it will enhance the economic position of farmers and ranchers, and serve the long-term best interests of consumers and taxpayers as we move into the 1970's.

Address by Secretary of Agriculture Clifford M. Hardin at New Mexico Farm Bureau anniversary meeting, Roswell, N.M., July 31, 1970, 6:30 p.m. (MDT).

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The new law can be of particular benefit to cooperating producers of wheat, cotton, feed grains, wool and dairy products. The cattle industry will also benefit through the assurance of stable feed supplies.

The bill will give farmers greater opportunity to take advantage of the efficiencies associated with crop specialization and will permit increased flexibility in the management of cropping systems. It removes penalties for over-planting and abolishes marketing quotas.

Leverage to improve markets for American agriculture in foreign lands is provided by the bill. Also, with respect to exports, the measure calls for a continuation of Public Law 480, the Food for Peace program.

Since 1954 when Public Law 480 was first enacted, close to \$19 billion worth of U.S. agricultural products have been shipped overseas. This program has been important in removing some of our excess stocks of commodities and additionally has had significant humanitarian benefits. Moreover, and very importantly, most of these shipments are now made under sales agreements, and they are helping create market demands in foreign countries for more American products in the future.

The provisions of the 1970 Agricultural Act will help agriculture and the country as a whole. At this point I want to express my personal appreciation for the help and support of your two able Congressmen, Ed Foreman and Manuel Lujan, who have supported this legislation vigorously.

They tell me Ed Foreman has a reputation out here for getting things done. I can corroborate that. He has been involved in a number of actions that have been taken on behalf of agriculture in this State--the increase in the peanut acreage allotment for Roosevelt County is one example. And I am well aware of Manuel Lujan's parallel efforts, especially in the field of watersheds and conservation.

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Time does not permit me to go into detail on the many ways whereby agriculture and the Government are working together not only to strengthen New Mexico's economy but also to serve the broad consumer public. Two or three items will serve as illustrations:

-- Meat imports. The recent adjustment of import levels reinforced the system of voluntary restraints agreed upon by foreign producers and will curtail transshipments through Canada, while maintaining price stability. The price situation will enable cattlemen to increase their holdings of heifers and to increase the supply of U.S. produced meat in the years ahead--to take care of a growing domestic demand and hopefully to supply a potential foreign demand for quality cuts. This in turn would contribute importantly to our balance of payments.

-- Screwworm control. It's hardly necessary for me to remind you of the success that has been achieved during the past 10 or 12 years in screwworm control. We are continuing to produce and release sterile flies in areas of known and expected outbreaks. In cooperation with Mexico we maintain the barrier zone along the border, as you know. Officials of our two governments have established that it is both desirable and economically feasible to move the zone south to the area of the Tehuantepec Isthmus, and a satisfactory system of cost sharing is being sought so that this move can be made. Let me note parenthetically that this biological control method represents the first major demonstration of a means other than the use of pesticides to curb pest attack--highly significant in these days of ecological concern.

-- Natural resources. You are of course familiar with the success of the Northern Rio Grande Resource Conservation and Development Project and similar endeavors in this state. This kind of development goes beyond agriculture, and adds substantially to your state's social, economic and recreational values.

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Many of you in these eastern counties have joined in the Great Plains Conservation Program, which extends northward through the vast plains region to Canada. More than 30,000 contracts have been signed by farmers agreeing to participate in conservation practices--conversion of cropland to grass cover, increasing water supplies and improving their use, introducing better rangeland management, and developing new wildlife habitats.

Since Dust Bowl days a total of \$127 million has been spent or obligated under this program to combat the threats of drought and wind erosion. In these days of concern with environmental improvement, it is timely to call attention to the success of the Great Plains effort over the past third of a century. The benefits have accrued not only to agriculture but to all the people of the Great Plains region, and in due course to the whole American public, in terms of the preservation and enhancement of natural resources.

In the human resources area, it was a year ago in May that President Nixon stated emphatically that the time has come when hunger and malnutrition must be eliminated in this country, for all time. In the year that has elapsed, tremendous progress has been made. Greater numbers of needy people are being given the opportunity to have nourishing food, essential to the health and strength they must have as they struggle out of the trap of poverty.

A year ago, in June of 1969, our Food Stamp program aided 3.2 million persons. This past June the total of those participating had reached a record 6.3 million. Adding 4.1 million more who are recipients of the Commodity Distribution program brings to more than 10 million the total of needy persons now receiving food program benefits. The programs are working and, most important, increasingly they are being utilized by the people who need them most--the poorest of the poor.

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The programs to end hunger do more than assist people. They mark progress in human development. Hand in hand with the food programs, for example, nearly 7,000 nutrition aides are working for the Extension Service in the 50 states, in rural depressed areas and in the inner city areas.

These are persons who were hired from those areas, given intensive training, and are now back working with households in their home communities, showing how to get the best values from food. Often they find needy families who did not even know they were eligible for help, and are putting them in touch with the proper programs--not only for food but oftentimes for medical or financial assistance.

The food programs and nutrition aides are encouraging a large segment of our population to use the most nutritious foods; they are creating a continuity of demand for farm commodities with the highest food values. As time goes on and many poverty victims become economically independent, they will be conditioned to continue buying foods of higher nutritional quality.

In this sense the food programs are creating markets for agriculture beyond the immediate dimensions of the funds being allocated to Food Stamps and commodity distribution, even though these themselves constitute large markets for farm output.

As with food programs, so it is with conservation efforts, screwworm control, or payments that adjust crop production to market requirements. Everybody concerned, consumers and producers and taxpayers all, stands to gain from an efficient and dynamic agricultural industry.

A century ago, much of the West's growth began when the Government entrusted farmers with free land under the Homestead Act. It started a westward migration. The early Homesteaders and their descendants turned what they had been given into something of value so that in time the whole country benefited.

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In recent years America has witnessed the phenomenon of a different kind of migration--a surge of people from rural to urban areas, causing difficulties both for the depleted rural communities and for the over-crowded metropolitan centers.

With 70 percent of our population jammed into 2 percent of our land area, the perplexing problems of congestion, crime, poverty, housing, dissatisfaction and dissent will only multiply unless we can bring about a healthy redistribution of our rapidly growing population.

In the light of this need, a new policy of national growth is emerging. President Nixon expressed it when he said in his State of the Union Message: "We must create a new rural environment that will not only stem the migration to urban centers but reverse it."

It is time right now to mobilize our best talents and energies to induce a new migration that can revitalize rural regions and reduce urban pressures. In his recent conference with governors and civic leaders of five states in North Dakota, the President reiterated the need for local people, and local units of government, to make sound plans for creative rural growth.

Without question, people in agriculture will be in the forefront of these efforts. It is imperative to provide new opportunities--economic, social, cultural and recreational--to stimulate the wholesome expansion of small cities and towns--new growth centers in America's heartland.

Citizens of New Mexico are demonstrating each day that they possess the imagination, talents and energies to meet this challenge. What you have accomplished with your industrial park at the Roswell Airport provides an inspiring example of your progressiveness.

So, in conclusion, let me call on you to nurture the kind of enterprise demonstrated here. I urge you to do all you can to give new perspective and new meaning to the spirit that has made America great--and can make our Nation even better.

